

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 VOE-00 PPTE-00 H-02 MMO-04 PER-03

ABF-01 SS-15 SP-02 A-01 OC-05 CCO-00 SCSE-00 VA-01

OPR-02 HEW-06 TRSE-00 DHA-02 /056 W

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R 261103Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8324

UNCLAS BEIRUT 0798

FOR SCA, VA, SCS, PPT, NEA AND H.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, LE

SUBJECT: CONSUL SERVICES AT BEIRUT

1. IN VIEW DEPARTMENT'S DIRECTIVE TO REDUCE POST PERSONNEL, CONSULAR SECTION WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO PROVIDE UN-INTERRUPTED SERVICES. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, CONSULAR SECTION'S STAFF OF SEVEN OFFICERS AND ONE AMERICAN SECRETARY NOW ORDERED REDUCED TO THREE OFFICERS. IN VIEW DANGER REACHING EMBASSY FROM VARIOUS OUTLYING AREAS, ATTENDANCE BY OUR STAFF OF TWELVE LOCALS HAS VARIED OVER PAST TWO MONTHS FROM ZERO TO ELEVEN. WE ARE FURTHER HANDICAPPED BY SHORT WORKDAY AS EMBASSY HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CLOSING 1:30 P.M. IN VIEW INCREASING DANGERS TO PERSONNEL ON STREETS AFTER THAT TIME.

2. OBVIOUSLY OUR FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO SERVICE OF AMERICANS. WE WILL, HOWEVER, ENDEAVOR MAINTAIN VISA SERVICES AS WELL. TRANSFER OF VISA FUNCTIONS TO ANOTHER POST DOES NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR PRACTICAL FOR WHAT WE HOPE IS TEMPORARY PERIOD IN VIEW OF COSTS, COMPLEXITIES AND TIME INVOLVED FOR TRANSFER.

3. DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS CONSULAR FUNCTIONS FOLLOWS:

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A. NONIMMIGRANT VISAS. WORKLOAD VARIES GREATLY WITH

SECURITY SITUATION IN CITY. WHEN EMBASSY NEIGHBORHOOD UNDER SNIPER FIRE, WORKLOAD NEARLY NIL. AT OTHER TIMES, NIV WORKLOAD AT RECORD LEVELS FOR WINTER SEASON. ASSUMING RETURN TO NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL WORKLOAD, NIV SERVICES WILL BE FIRST TO SUFFER FROM STAFF REDUCTION. IF NIV PERSONNEL NEEDED FOR SERVICES TO AMERICANS, NIV SERVICES WILL BE SUSPENDED.

B. STEADY IMMIGRANT VISA DEMAND CONTINUES. EVEN ON MOST DIFFICULT DAYS, AT LEAST A FEW OF SCHEDULED IV APPLICANTS APPEAR FOR APPOINTMENTS DESPITE SNIPER FIRE. IN VIEW LONG TERM SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS AND IN VIEW FACT THAT SOME 95PCT OF OUR IV APPLICANTS ARE CLOSE RELATIVES OF US CITIZENS, WE WILL SUSPEND IV SERVICES ONLY AS LAST RESORT TO MEET DEMAND FOR SERVICES TO AMERICANS.

C. CITIZENSHIP AND PASSPORT SERVICES. AS SIZE OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY DECREASES, WORKLOAD REDUCES. FULL SERVICES WILL BE MAINTAINED.

D. FEDERAL BENEFITS. AS SCS HAS BEEN INFORMED, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WE UNABLE PERFORM INVESTIGATIONS. SINCE OUR PERSONNEL UNABLE TRAVEL OUTSIDE IMMEDIATE VICINITY EMBASSY. WE WILL CONTINUE DISTRIBUTE TREASURY CHECKS TO THOSE ABLE REACH EMBASSY TO PICK UP. MAIL SYSTEM INOPERATIVE. EVEN IF WE ABLE DELIVER ONLY SMALL PORTION OF CHECKS, WISH CONTINUE THE EFFORT IN VIEW SEVERE HARDSHIP TO PENSIONERS WHO HAVE NO OTHER SOURCE INCOME.

E. WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS. WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS COMPLY WITH ALL W/W INQUIRIES RE AMERICAN CITIZENS REPEAT AMERICAN CITIZENS. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, SINCE OUR PERSONNEL UNABLE TRAVEL AND MAILS INOPERATIVE, TELEPHONE IS OUR ONLY TOOL IN ACTING ON SUCH INQUIRIES. EMBASSY TELEPHONES FREQUENTLY OUT OF ORDER, REQUIRING DISPATCH OF CONSULAR OFFICER TO ANOTHER LOCATION FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE SERVICE. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY SECTIONS OF COUNTRY NOW WITHOUT TELEPHONE SERVICE AND MANY LINES IN OTHER SECTIONS OUT OF ORDER. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST.

F. PROTECTION AND OTHER SERVICES TO AMERICANS.
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ALTHOUGH VOLUME OF CASES HAS DECREASED, DIFFICULTY IN SOLVING EACH CASES INCREASED MANY FOLD. IN VIEW LACK OF TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION, INABILITY TO TRAVEL FROM EMBASSY AREA, CLOSURE OR DESTRUCTION SERVICE AND OTHER FIRMS, AND VIRTUAL NONEXISTENCE OF GOL, EACH CASE COMPLEX. WIL CONTINUE PROVIDE FULL SERVICES BEST OUR ABILITY.

G. CONSULAR CORRESPONDENCE. ALL CONSUL CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AT EMBASSY TO DATE HAS BEEN ANSWERED. RESPONSE

TIME TO CORRESPONDENCE ALREADY LONG IN VIEW OF PERIODICALLY
NONEXISTENT LEBANESE INTERNATIONALMAILSAND EXTREMELY
SLOW POUCH SERVICE. STAFF REDUCTIONS WILL INCREASE
DIFFICULTY IN ACTING ON AND REPLYING TO FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE.
WE ANTICIPATE LARGE QUANTITY OF CORRESPONDENCE WILL ARRIVE
HERE NOW THAT AIRPORT HAS REOPENED (AFTER 7 DAY CLOSURE)
WHICH WE WILL BE HARDPRESSED TO ACT ON EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH
DRASTICALLY REDUCED STAFF. DELAYS WILL EXTEND, TO SOME
DEGREE, EVEN TO CONGRESSIONALS.

3. WE WILL DO OUR BEST, BUT HOPE DEPARTMENT WILL BEAR
WITH US.
LAMBRAKIS

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